



FAR's first public service announcement

Families for Addiction Recovery (FAR) has launched its first national Public Service Announcement (PSA) for television and the internet. It raises awareness that addiction is a disease that shatters families. Viewers will learn that FAR provides education about addiction and support services for parents whose children struggle with addiction. To view our PSA visit our [website](#).



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New for MDs – pocket guide on alcohol use disorder

FAR partnered with META:PHI (Mentoring, Education and Clinical Tools for Addiction: Primary Care - Hospital Integration) and the CFPC (College of Family Physicians of Canada) to provide a new educational tool for family physicians. The one -page, two-sided Guide contains information for family physicians for the office management of alcohol withdrawal and the treatment of alcohol use disorder with medications. FAR funded the printing and mailing of the Guide to the 34,000 family physicians in Canada and the translation of the document into French. The CFPC endorsed the Guide and it will be posted on the CFPC website.

Announcement

FAR is pleased to announce that we have been asked to join the Toronto Drug Strategy Panel.



Partnering with law enforcement



Over the summer, Louise Lemieux White, Angie Hamilton and Sydney Graham met with five police platoons in Toronto Police Division 43, Scarborough. We discussed the impact of drugs on the adolescent brain, stigma, drug policy and the effect of addiction on the family. Each of the five meetings generated great conversations and in-depth exchange of information.

Presentation on decriminalization

FAR presents at the 2019 Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine (CSAM) Conference in Halifax

Angie Hamilton, FAR's Executive Director, and Dr. Barbara Watts, an ER doctor and FAR Board Member, attended the 2019 CSAM Conference in Halifax in October. The conference offered many educational sessions on all aspects of addiction medicine and public policy matters concerning substance use disorders. Angie gave a well-received presentation to a small group of doctors at a Round Table on whether CSAM should support the decriminalization of all drugs. The answer from the attendees was a resounding yes (see picture)! Angie and Barb also joined the CSAM Policy Committee. The conference was a great educational experience and a super opportunity to meet healthcare workers on the front line of addiction medicine.





Engaging UofT medical students

Addiction Medicine Week



In June the University of Toronto (UofT) held its first Addiction Medicine Week for medical students. The week was organized by medical student Robin Glicksman and included sessions on drug policy and stigma. The students also spent a day at Homewood Health Centre in Guelph. Robin advised that the week would not have been possible without FAR's sponsorship. The students have been presenting the results of the Addiction Medicine Week Program Evaluation and have been receiving great feedback. We were thrilled to find out that they will be meeting with the medical program Vice



Dr. Barb Watts addressing UofT medical students

Dean and Pre-clerkship Director (first 2 years of medical school) to discuss incorporating lessons of the program into the formal medical curriculum for all medical students. FAR has been invited to speak at next year's UofT Addiction Medicine Week.



Family Medicine Week

The UofT Department of Family and Community Medicine added a session on Addiction Medicine to their Family Medicine Week for medical students in June. Dr. Caryn Green, an addiction medicine physician, discussed harm reduction and Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinics. Caryn helped start the **RAAM clinic at North York General Hospital**. FAR is grateful that UofT asked our board members, Dr. Barbara Watts and Angie Hamilton, to address the medical students. Barb discussed running a rural family practice and practicing as a rural ER physician. She also discussed how addiction impacted her family. Angie discussed her lived experience as the parent and aunt of someone with addiction. She also discussed harm reduction and the urgent need to change harmful drug policies, eliminate stigma, ensure compassionate, evidence-based treatment on demand for all, and improve consent and capacity laws.



When youth wait for treatment

FAR contributed to research by Pine River Institute and Laurentian University to study what happens when youth are placed on a waitlist for residential treatment. The results have been published in **The Canadian Journal of Family and Youth** [Volume 11 No. 1 (2019)].

Pine River Institute interviews parents when their child is placed on the waitlist for residential treatment and again just before the child begins residential treatment. Currently the wait time for treatment is 16 months for males and there are over 200 youth on the waitlist.

The study showed:

- Waiting for treatment left families and youth susceptible to significant further harms, with ripple effects on communities in terms of public expenditures on justice and health care systems.
- It adversely affected marital and all family relationships.
- It generated resentment, bitterness, and alienation among siblings.
- Extended family experienced fear and distrust, leading to fewer family gatherings or the youth not being allowed to spend time with extended family.

FAR will be using this research in our advocacy efforts.

Involuntary treatment

The issue of when, if ever, it is appropriate to treat someone with addiction against their will is the most divisive issue in the field of addiction. The two main arguments against involuntary treatment are that it violates a person's rights and that it doesn't work.

FAR takes issue with both of these conclusions, particularly with respect to minors. We believe it is consistent with the principles of harm reduction that sometimes treatment, even against a person's will, is necessary to protect a person's rights. For more details, see our **Letter to the Canadian Medical Association Journal** in response to the Commentary "Secure Care; More Harm than Good". The impact of addiction on autonomy and capacity and the rights of minors under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are discussed.



International Overdose Awareness Day

FAR's Executive Director, Angie Hamilton, had the honour of addressing the attendees of International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) in Toronto on August 31st. IOAD raises awareness of the staggering losses from preventable overdose deaths. Thanks to Irene Reilly-Paterson of Moms Stop the Harm for inviting us to speak.





Parent To Parent volunteer training



FAR has been investing in its' volunteers to further strengthen their ability to support the parents of children struggling with substance use disorder. In October, sixteen volunteer supporters gathered in Toronto for two full days of training in CRAFT – Community Reinforcement and Family Training – conducted by a trainer, Ken Carpenter, from CMC: Foundation for Change in the U.S. We also received training in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Motivational Interviewing (MI).

CRAFT is an evidence-based approach to relating to a child with an addiction that keeps the door of hope open and gives parents strategies to influence their child in the direction of recovery.

The approaches of CRAFT put more tools in the toolbox for the volunteers in FAR's Parent To Parent program for the benefit of parents trying to find a way to motivate their child to change.

If you are a parent with lived experience and are interested in becoming a parent supporter, please contact Louise Lemieux White, louise@farcanada.org. To learn more about CRAFT visit motivationandchange.com

Parent to Parent support program

FAR's P2P support program continues to grow. Our trained parent volunteers provide free over the phone support to other parents on their journey with children struggling with addiction. We have supported parents in eight provinces, primarily Ontario, BC and Saskatchewan. No family is immune to the disease of addiction. If you are a parent of a child who is struggling with problematic alcohol or other drug use and would like to receive non-judgmental support from a parent who understands, **reach out to us.**

**Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.
– Viktor Frankl**





Engaging recovery community

September 2019 - Recovery Month and Recovery Day are national events that raise awareness, challenge stigma and celebrate the journey to recovery. Speaking openly about addiction recovery helps break down prejudices and stereotypes. It's an important first step to opening the door to recovery.

During the month of September, FAR ran a successful campaign across its social media channels. The public was invited to share their support using our Profile Frames on Facebook. We are delighted with the positive response the campaign received. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated!

[#IWeBelieveInRecovery](#) • [#RecoverOutLoud](#)



[Watch Recovery Day video](#)



FAR was a community partner of Recovery Day Ottawa. Thanks to Doug Hunter for staffing our booth and providing attendees with information about addiction, recovery and FAR's services for parents.



FAR sponsored the Recovery Capital Conference, Toronto, where we recruited allies for our Facebook Campaign. We also discussed our concerns with MPP Robin Martin (on left), Parliamentary Assistant to the Ontario Minister of Health.

Want to volunteer? Share your story of recovery?

Please reach out to us at
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